

have mass transit, or any other alternative. I believe it is high time that Congress stop catering to Big Oil and conservationists who do not have a clue. Please help your constituents!

VERN, *Twin Falls.*

Thank you for soliciting and receiving emails about the high energy prices. As is so often heard these days, "something has to be done". We are a middle class, working family with two adult children (one in the Coast Guard, one soon to leave for college) and one teen driver (yikes!) still at home. I could elaborate on and on about how gas prices are affecting all of us but will try to keep it concise. We had been planning a congratulatory vacation to Hawaii for our family for quite some time—to congratulate one son for graduation from high school and to honor our son in the Coast Guard for his promotion. Due to gas prices, we have had to scale down our trip and will now be camping on the beach in Oregon. Our youngest is working full time, so we have given him the use of our fuel-efficient car to get to and from work. He is unable to ride a bike due to traffic and for his safety. Therefore we are using a vehicle (not by choice) that is not fuel-efficient to commute to work. In an effort to keep it affordable, we are carpooling and will soon be taking the motorcycle safety course in hopes to utilize a motorcycle. Using a motorcycle is only a band aid as it will not help in the winter. We have been looking for a used fuel-efficient vehicle, but the prices have climbed dramatically and they are very hard to find. I am so disappointed in the gas mileage for all cars on the market. I know that our country can improve this. Hondas and Toyotas for example have gotten over 30 mpg for many years. Why cannot we raise the bar and demand at least 35 mpg?

My husband and I have discussed the huge "trickle-down" that the gas prices will have on the economy. Because of the high gas prices, we have chosen to cut out other services. We are no longer subscribing to the Idaho Statesman (which we have always taken), we will be discontinuing our home phone service and are cutting back any way we can. I know of other people such as us who are doing the same. The impact of these cutbacks is just beginning to be seen, such as with Starbucks, Round Table and other businesses closing. We understand that we will be contributing to this downturn by cutting back on services but it is necessary.

Again, thank you in advance for your help with this matter.

GAIL and DENNIS.

Here is an addition to the testimonials you asked for recently concerning the effects on the high price of fuel. Not only am I going broke due to high gas prices, food costs, etc., but also this is the first year we have had to scratch items off the grocery shopping list. This is literally taking food off the table and taking food away from my family.

DEWEY, *Idaho Falls.*

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

GEORGE J. MITCHELL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

• Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, as our world continues to face unprecedented challenges, now more than ever, we must work with our allies and friends. I support the work of the George J. Mitchell Scholarship Program which seeks to strengthen relations between the United States and Ireland. Like the

great man it is named after, the George J. Mitchell Scholarship Program fosters connections between future generations of American leaders and their Irish counterparts, regardless of ancestry. It seeks to further the education of American students through post graduate studies while building bonds between the Mitchell Scholars and the Irish and the Northern Ireland communities in which they live and study.

Like many Pennsylvanians, my family can trace its ancestry to Ireland. Through the generations, our connection with and affinity for the Emerald Isle has deepened. However, with fewer and fewer Irish moving to America, it is critical that we encourage all Americans, not just those with Irish ancestry, to forge connections with the Irish people. While Irish Americans have become Mitchell Scholars, so too have young Americans from different backgrounds.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will soon be welcoming Alexandra Chirinos, who will work as a judicial law clerk for the Honorable Legrome Davis in the Federal Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Alexandra was born in Mexico and graduated from the University of Texas, Austin. Her college thesis explored the factors that cause migrant women to endure domestic abuse and examined the reasons why existing abuse prevention programs were ineffective in migrant communities. She founded the UT Bilingual Mentoring Program as well as the Hispanic Scholarship Fund Scholar Chapter dedicated to providing academic and service opportunities for students of all backgrounds. As a Mitchell Scholar, she obtained her MA in human rights law from the National University of Ireland Galway and Queen's University, Belfast. She then graduated from Harvard Law School, where she was the executive editor of the *Latino Law Review*, the copresident of the Latin American Law Society and one of the founding members of the Harvard Immigration Project.

Alexandra's journey and commitment to intellectual achievement, leadership, and public service is just one example of the many young Americans participating in and being inspired through the George J. Mitchell Scholarship program. The bond between Pennsylvania and Ireland will only deepen as Dan Rooney of Pittsburgh, PA, is the President's nominee to become the next U.S. Ambassador to Ireland. In that capacity, I fully expect Dan to advance the cause of peace among the Irish people and to continue developing relationships between the United States and Ireland like those created through the George Mitchell Scholarship Program. •

REMEMBERING MILFORD JUNE "DOLLY" COOPER

• Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask my fellow colleagues to join me in honoring the memory of a dedicated serv-

ant and leader, Milford June "Dolly" Cooper. After a lifetime of unprecedented service to his State and Nation as a World War II veteran and a member of the South Carolina House of Representatives, Mr. Cooper passed away in Greenville, SC, on April 26, 2009, at the age of 88.

While he will be remembered by most as a man who loved to help people and demonstrated an unwavering dedication to the community, I will remember him as a spirited, commanding, honest giant of a man. Affectionately referred to as "Dolly" by all who knew him, he was a World War II veteran who prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of our freedom. He served in the 30th Infantry Division and saw 11 months of combat in Europe, at Normandy, at the Battle of the Bulge, and at the Rhine River. He was also involved with the capture of the last large German city, Magdeburg, which was 45 miles from Berlin. For his service he was awarded the Purple Heart, Bronze Star, American Defense Silver Medal, the Combat Infantry Badge, and the Belgian Forragere Award.

Perhaps one of my greatest honors was to see that Mr. Cooper was in person at the dedication of the National D-day Memorial on June 6, 2001. This memorial is a tribute to Mr. Cooper's valor, fidelity, and sacrifice, and those who served along side him during the allied invasion of Western Europe.

Born and raised in upstate South Carolina, Mr. Cooper attended Piedmont High School in 1937 and joined the South Carolina National Guard in Easley. After his service in the military, Mr. Cooper opened the Piedmont Economy Store, which he solely owned and operated from 1955 to 1999.

In 1974 he was elected to the South Carolina House of Representatives on a platform of bringing health care services to rural South Carolina. Mr. Cooper served House District 10 for 16 years.

In addition to his time in politics, Mr. Cooper was active in the Pelzer Lions Club for 55 years. He was member of the Medical University of South Carolina Board of Trustees from 1989 to 1996. Mr. Cooper also served as a board member for the Pelzer Rescue Squad, the Appalachian Health Council, and the Baptist Hospital Boards for Easley and Columbia. After decades of serving South Carolina, Mr. Cooper was awarded the Order of the Palmetto from Governor Carroll Campbell in 1989.

Mr. Cooper is survived by his wife of 61 years, Melba Blackmon Cooper, by his four children, six grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

I ask that the U.S. Senate join me in commemorating Mr. Cooper's lifelong dedication to service to our country and to the State of South Carolina. •

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HALEKULANI HOTEL

• Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, the Halekulani is, without question, one of

the signature hotels of Hawaii. It is synonymous of the interweaving of luxury hospitality and Hawaii's unique history and local culture. Its roots trace back some 200 years when Princess Likelike and ancient Hawaiian fishermen named its Waikiki beachfront location Halekulani, or the "house befitting heaven."

This year, the Halekulani is celebrating the 25th anniversary of its reopening in 1984, following a grand property-wide renovation by its current owners, Mitsui Fudosan, USA, Inc., a branch of one of Japan's leading companies.

This new chapter for the Halekulani builds on its fabled history, and strengthens and expands its international reputation for excellence and community involvement. The Halekulani is more than a unique visitor experience with open courtyards, lush gardens, ocean breezes, and a spa that offers the healing touch of Polynesian traditions; it is also an enthusiastic promoter of Hawaii's history and the arts, sponsoring the Honolulu Symphony's "Halekulani Masterworks" and offering guests special access to Hawaii's leading museums and historic buildings.

In 1907, the original Halekulani opened as a residential hotel owned by Robert Lewers that was called the Hau Tree with a beachfront home and five bungalows. Ten years later, Juliet and Clifford Kimball bought the hotel, renamed it the Halekulani, and began catering to well-do-to travelers. In 1962, the Norton Clap family of Seattle bought the hotel, and sold it 39 years later to Mitsui Fudosan, USA.

While each owner of the Halekulani sought to enhance the hotel's distinctiveness in different ways, all four shared a common goal: a commitment to excellence that remains unwavering.

I congratulate the Halekulani as it celebrates the 25th anniversary of its reopening, and as it looks forward to a bright future. I am certain its owners will continue their best efforts to maintain the Halekulani as a landmark hotel, a leader in the international travel and visitor industry, and an icon of Hawaii.●

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL MARGARET JOHNSON

● Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, today I honor in the RECORD of the Senate LTC Margaret A. Johnson of the Georgia Army National Guard on the occasion of her retirement after 22 years of service.

Lieutenant Colonel Johnson, who is from Macon, GA, graduated from Wesleyan College in 1969 with a bachelor's degree in English, and in 1976 received a master's degree in English from the University of South Florida. In 1980 she graduated from Mercer University's Walter F. George School of Law with a juris doctor degree. Lieutenant Colonel Johnson took her impressive resume to the Georgia National Guard and was

commissioned as first lieutenant into the Judge Advocate General Corps.

During her 22 years of service, Lieutenant Colonel Johnson was given many challenging assignments throughout the United States, and rose to the challenge on each and every occasion. When her country asked her to serve in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, she answered the call and has spent the last 2 years on active duty. Lieutenant Colonel Johnson culminated her career as the deputy staff judge advocate for the Office for the Administrative Review of the Detention of Enemy Combatants, Arlington, VA, where she rose to the challenge once again and performed her job duties excellently. She provided much-needed leadership for a legal department that had to quickly respond to ever changing standards established by Congress and the Federal courts.

In testament to her service, Lieutenant Colonel Johnson was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, the Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Medal and the Georgia Meritorious Service Medal. I honor LTC Margaret A. Johnson on the occasion of her retirement, and I extend to her my sincere gratitude for her dedication to the defense of our nation. I know that Lieutenant Colonel Johnson's children, Mary Catherine Johnson and Margaret Amy Allen, are so proud of their mother for her long and distinguished career, and I would also like to express my gratitude to them as well.●

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AS- TRONAUTICS CORPORATION OF AMERICA

● Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, today I acknowledge the outstanding achievements of the Astronautics Corporation of America which will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in Milwaukee on May 31, 2009. I want to share a bit of background with my colleagues about the Astronautics Corporation and recognize their vital contribution to Milwaukee and the Nation.

The Astronautics Corporation of America was established in 1959 when Nate Zelazo and a small team of experienced engineers started their own company devoted to advanced technology in the aerospace field. Since then, the company has become a trailblazer in developing and manufacturing military and commercial electronics. Their products are used throughout the world in a wide range of sea, ground, and aerospace applications. Today, more than 100,000 aircraft use Astronautics flight instruments, displays, computers, and components. The company keeps jobs in Wisconsin while building technology systems that keep our service men and women safe.

It is with great pride that I wish the Astronautics Corporation of America congratulations on their 50th anniversary and continued success as innovators.●

TRIBUTE TO THE LYME-OLD LYME FIRST ROBOTICS TEAM

● Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I wish today to honor the "Techno Ticks," the FIRST Robotics team from Lyme-Old Lyme High School in Old Lyme, CT, which won the Chairman's Award at the 2009 International FIRST Robotics Championship. The Chairman's Award is the most prestigious honor given out at the FIRST competition, which this year included 348 teams from most states in the United States as well as Brazil, Israel, Canada, and Mexico. It is awarded to the team that best represents a model for other teams to emulate, and which embodies the goals and purposes of FIRST.

FIRST—For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology—was established in 1989 to inspire young people's interest and participation in science and technology through a variety of mentor-based programs that help young people develop skills in science, technology, and engineering. Every year, the FIRST Robotics Competition challenges teams of high school students to design and build robots from a kit of hundreds of parts. The teams then control their robots in a game against other teams. The goal of this program is not just to teach students about robotics, but help them to develop general problem solving abilities as well as self-confidence, communication skills, and leadership.

Before participating in the International Competition, the Techno Ticks won the Chairman's Award at the Connecticut FIRST Robotics Competition for the 7th year in a row—a record amongst the more than 1700 FIRST teams now in operation worldwide. This remarkable record of success is a testament to the hard work and dedication of head coach William Derry and all the students and faculty who have been a part of the Techno Ticks over the last 11 years. The team has also benefitted from the efforts of many volunteers and supporters, including mentors from local businesses that generously share their time and expertise with the team.

At a time when our Nation's ability to sustain a growing economy and create good jobs at home increasingly depends upon our achievements in science and technology, the FIRST competition has helped to instill in many young people a thirst for discovery that leads so many to pursue a career in the physical sciences. It is hardly surprising that so many former Techno Ticks have gone on to study engineering. Two years ago, I was fortunate enough to attend the Connecticut regional competition in Hartford, and I couldn't help but be amazed by the creativity and dedication the Ticks and all the other teams put into building their robots.

I offer my congratulations to Coach Derry and the Lyme-Old Lyme Techno Ticks for winning the Chairman's Award at the 2009 International FIRST Robotics Championship and commend